

J.J.S. Pamphlet box No. 1

THE
CANADIAN CONFEDERATION
DEFENDED.

BY THE HON. CHARLES TUPPER, C.B.

A SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF CANADA, IN
REPLY TO THE HON. JOSEPH HOWE, MARCH 12, 1868.

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(From the "CANADIAN NEWS," June 11, 1868.)

MR. BRIGHT has given notice of the following resolution, which will be submitted to the House of Commons on Monday night next :—

That this House is informed by petition presented on the 15th day of May last, signed by thirty-six of the thirty-eight members of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia, and by sixteen of the nineteen members elected by that colony to serve in the Parliament at Ottawa, that great dissatisfaction exists with regard to an act passed last session, entitled "An act for the Union of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick," and that an address be presented to her Majesty the Queen praying that her Majesty will be pleased to appoint a commission or commissioners to proceed to Nova Scotia for the purpose of examining into the causes of the alleged discontent, with a view to their consideration and removal.

In view of the discussion which may take place on this motion, it may be well to call attention to the following speech recently delivered by the Hon. Charles Tupper in the Dominion Parliament on the question of confederation generally and specially in reply to the Hon. Joseph Howe, who had just made an anti-confederation speech :—

Mr. Speaker—No member of this House can regret more sincerely than myself that my hon. friend who has just sat down occupies a position which prevents his great talents from being made available for the advancement of the common interest of the British North American provinces, now united under one dominion. All who have listened to the eloquent appeal just made to this House must feel how valuable would be the aid which the hon. member could give in promoting the union and consolidation of our common country at this important era in its history. I, sir, have from the first hour of my public life been an ardent advocate of the union of British North

America under one Government. Whether considered in relation to the position and progress of the whole confederation or in reference to the province of Nova Scotia, to which I belong, I have never doubted the advantage of union. Separated as those provinces were, with diverse currencies and hostile tariffs, it was impossible that our commerce should ever attain the position that union would open up. The old province of Canada, notwithstanding its immense territory and great natural resources, could never attain an important position while for five months in the year it was cut off from access to the ocean and compelled to communicate with the parent state through a foreign country. The maritime provinces below, comparatively small and insignificant, could never hope to occupy a position of influence or importance except in connection with their larger sister, Canada. The past history of that province has exhibited the most striking evidence on that point.

My hon. friend who has just addressed you denounced on the floor of our own Parliament the Reciprocity Treaty between British America and the United States, on the ground that while it disposed of our most important commercial interests and ceded away the invaluable fisheries of Nova Scotia, the Government of that province had not even the opportunity afforded them of expressing an opinion on a matter so vitally affecting their interests during the negotiation

that treaty. We have seen the credit of our bonds in the London market impaired by a struggle for power in the Legislature of Canada, where we had neither voice nor influence. If, therefore, we were in our state of isolation powerless to protect our most material interests, which were disposed of without our being able to offer an opinion thereon, I ask my hon. friend if he does not think it was desirable that the views and feelings of our province should be presented in the Parliament of a United British America?

No man can look at the geographical position of Nova Scotia without feeling that Providence intended that we should form the great highway of communication between not only the sister colonies behind us, but also a large portion of the western states and the European world. Yet my hon. friend knows that after he had laboured with great ability for a quarter of a century to accomplish the construction of an Intercolonial Railway every effort had failed, as it had become perfectly apparent that that great work could only be accomplished by the union of the two Canadas and Nova Scotia and New Brunswick under one Government. Not only has this great boon been secured for our province, but by the construction of the Western extension, from St. John to Bangor, already in progress, Nova Scotia must soon become the direct line of communication between London and New York.

It is impossible to examine the geological characteristics of Nova Scotia without seeing that Providence has given us all the elements of a great manufacturing industry. To say nothing of our valuable

gold mines as a means of attracting population, a great portion of our province is enriched with vast deposits of iron, coal, and limestone, the minerals which have made England the emporium of manufactures for the world. Yet with all this mineral wealth it was obvious that, without a union which would throw down the barriers to our manufacturing industry and open up commercial intercourse with our fellow colonists, we must be content largely to forego the great material advantages which nature had bestowed. Union has now given us a population of 4,000,000 instead of 400,000.

My hon. friend has spoken eloquently of the great importance of immigration as the true source of advancement for a country like ours, but it must be apparent to all that United British North America will be in a position to attract population, capital, and skill to a far greater extent than would be possible were we separate and isolated communities.

He has also described in glowing but not extravagant terms the immense value of the fisheries of Nova Scotia, yet I ask him if United British America is unequal to the task of protecting that valuable public domain, how isolation was likely to accomplish such an object?

As regards the extension of our commerce, it is well known that the ablest politicians in all these colonies exhausted their best efforts in a vain attempt to extend commercial intercourse between the different provinces. They failed because free trade involved the principle of union under one Government, which alone could secure a common tariff. If we wish to estimate what free trade with each other will do for us, we have only to look at its effects in other countries. When the thirteen American states obtained their independence their territory was no greater than ours—they had a smaller trade, revenue, and population than British America has to-day. Their first act was to strike down the hostile tariffs which separated the provinces, and open their country to unrestricted commercial intercourse from Maine to Mexico. The result was that their commerce developed with the utmost rapidity, until they soon became one of the most important commercial countries in the world.

Interprovincial union is no untried experiment. Contrast the condition of the two Canadas before and after the union. When separated by hostile tariffs and legislating against each other, the trade, revenue, and credit of both Canadas were paralysed; but from the date of the union all was changed and the country expanded with the most remarkable rapidity, until it obtained its present advanced position.

I have referred to the effect of union upon the progress and material interests of British America, but I admit frankly that there was one question that far transcended even those interests in importance, and that was the question of defence. The abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty, notwithstanding the evidence which existed to show that it had been more beneficial to the United States than ourselves, indicated a wish to obstruct our trade with a view to induce a desire in these provinces for a political connection with that country. The Fenian raids upon the provinces also led to the belief that material aid might be

found in British America by those who desired to change our allegiance to the Crown. To insure the most advantageous commercial intercourse with our American neighbours and protection from the harassing annoyance and expenditure connected with the mad designs of the Fenians, no better means could be adopted than to show the world that these hitherto isolated provinces were determined to stand shoulder to shoulder in the maintenance of our connection with the Crown, and those glorious and free British institutions which it has been our happiness to possess.

My hon. friend asks with a sneer where are we to obtain an army and navy, and endeavours to hold the Dominion of Canada up to the world as utterly defenceless and at the mercy of any power who may wish to bring us beneath their yoke. My answer is that there is a moral strength in our united attitude, which presents four millions of British freemen, devoted in their allegiance to the Crown and prepared to sustain each other in upholding the honour of their common country, which is the best guarantee for peace that we can have. But can my hon. friend be ignorant of the fact that the Imperial Government of Great Britain have pledged themselves to maintain the integrity of this dominion with the whole power of the empire against any assault, come from whom it may? Had we been unwise enough to set at defiance the earnest entreaty of the mother-country to unite our fortunes with each other, that we might be better prepared to assist in maintaining our liberties, we might have had good reason to expect that the aid of that Government, under whose fostering protection we have risen to our present position, might be withdrawn.

My hon. friend forgets that as long ago as 1854 he declared that these provinces could put 500,000 men in the field and, unaided by British troops, bid defiance to an invader. Now he ridicules the idea of arming the population, and thinks we must fall a helpless prey to any enemy. I have no reason to doubt the entire friendship of the United States. I hope and believe that they will be anxious to resume the most reciprocal and friendly relations with these united provinces. But, sir, I do not think that under any circumstances that country, so recently suffering from a calamitous war and oppressed by a gigantic debt, would attempt the subjugation of united British America, protected by the mightiest empire in the world. Having thus, sir, glanced at some of the reasons which have induced me to advocate a union of these provinces, I will briefly turn your attention to the position of Nova Scotia.

I admit frankly that the union party have been thoroughly and handsomely beaten at the recent general election, but I am happy to be able to relieve this House from the apprehension that an overwhelming majority of the people of that province are determined to obstruct and break down the union which has been formed. It is no new thing with us to have sweeping changes on such occasions. Only four years ago my hon. friend, notwithstanding his unrivalled popular talents, went to the polls with all the power of the Government, of which he was the head, in his hands, when he found himself beaten in

one of his strongholds by a majority of over 500, and 13 only of his supporters out of a House of 55 members were elected.

The Government of which I had the honour to be the leader believed that they owed a higher duty to the country than the maintenance of themselves and their party in power. The measure brought in to extend the railway to Pictou on the St. Lawrence cost us the support of the western members, known as the Yarmouth school. The measure providing for the support of schools by direct and compulsory taxation, so obnoxious to all young countries, was sufficient of itself to drive any party from power and would have swept us aside if the union had never been heard of. The Government were charged by their opponents with having sacrificed the interests of the fishermen to a Canadian policy to issue fishing licenses, and those who have heard my hon. friend to-night can form some idea of the effect of his perambulating the country with fierce denunciations of that kind, and with our having taxed the bread of the poor man in the interests of Canada, because we believed it impolitic to free their flour from the duty imposed by the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty. The facts, however, remained that the fishing grounds of Nova Scotia were occupied by the fishermen of the United States on payment of an insignificant charge, and a duty existed on American flour. This House can also imagine the consternation and dread excited in the back settlements of the country by the vivid and heartrending pictures drawn by my hon. friend of the youth and manhood of the country being taken from their homes to protect the interminable line of the Canadian frontier. While the people were told on the one hand that they must resort to direct taxation to sustain the local services of the country, Mr. Howe had everywhere asserted the statement made to-night—that the first effect of confederation would be to increase the indirect taxation of the country 50 per cent. It would be no doubt gratifying to the House to know that the financial position of Nova Scotia was so good, but the Finance Minister, who has to find the money, would show the House that, so far, the Dominion had not made much out of that province. The truth was, that to complete the public works on her own responsibility she would have been obliged to largely reduce the expenditures for the leading services or increase her tariff to at least 15 per cent.

Then, it must not be forgotten that the recent election was run under a franchise created by the Government of my hon. friend and which came into operation for the first time at the last election. In addition to all this, the Government was obliged just before the dissolution to bring in a new Representation Bill, in order to adapt the local Constitution to the new state of things under the union. We were thus compelled to reduce largely the representation of several counties, an act in itself extremely repulsive to the electors. The popular cry also was raised that the union, irrespective of its merits, had been forced on the people in an arbitrary and unconstitutional manner.

I need not in this House, I am sure, defend the mode in which the

Union Act was carried by the Imperial Parliament, based upon the action of large majorities in the Legislatures of all the provinces affected by that act. Pitt and Peel, and all the most eminent statesmen of England, have in the most unmistakeable terms asserted the right of Parliament to deal with any question, constitutional or otherwise, which in their judgment the good of the country demanded. My hon. friend himself and all the leading public men in Nova Scotia had from time to time recorded their opinions in favour of the colonies being united precisely in the mode adopted in this instance. Yet unionists and anti-unionists alike were called upon to denounce that mode as an invasion of their rights and punish those who carried the measure. Notwithstanding all these advantages in going to the polls, the House will be surprised to learn that my hon. friend (Mr. Howe) and his supporters failed to induce one-half of the electors of the province to go to the polls and record their votes in their favour! I have made the following calculation up with all the care in my power and will be glad to submit my figures to the scrutiny of my hon. friend. The unionists contested all but three counties in the province. In those three I have given the unionists one-third and two-thirds to the other side. There are about 48,000 voters in the province. Of those about 10,000 did not go to the polls, and of the remainder about 15,000 voted for the union candidates and 22,500 for their opponents, giving them a majority of about 7,500 votes in all.

But, sir, I am not prepared to admit that a majority of the electors have pronounced against the union or in favour of its repeal. Nay, more, sir, I am prepared to show the House that my hon. friend himself, and many of his leading supporters, went to the country pledged to give this union a fair trial. My hon. friend (Mr. H.), at a large meeting at Mason Hall at Halifax previous to the elections, said:—“Let us hope that they (the Canadians) will act justly. If they do, we should aid them to work the new system fairly;” and subsequently referring to the pledge then given the hon. gentleman, in a letter addressed to the people of Canada on the 18th of June last, over his own signature, said—“I, having expressed my determination to bow to the paramount authority of Parliament and try the experiment, am not likely to be deterred by necessary forms,” &c. Mr. Power, one of the members elected to represent the metropolitan constituency of Halifax in this Parliament, gave the following pledge to the electors in presence of his leader and his colleague (Mr. Jones), who also represents the county of Halifax:—“I will not detain you longer, but will conclude by saying that if you elect Mr. Jones and myself to the Dominion Parliament, the interests of Nova Scotia will not suffer at our hands. We are charged with intending to countenance factious opposition. No such thing. We have certainly given the scheme a conscientious and consistent opposition, but are now disposed, if we go to Ottawa and find it to work even moderately well, to let it have a fair trial.” The hon. member for Guysboro’, who led the opposition to union in the Nova Scotia Legislature at the last session on the ground that it had not been submitted to the electors, and who ably advocated those views,

took a subsequent occasion to say on the floor of the House that now that the Imperial Act had become the law of the land, he was prepared to bow to its authority and give his best aid to carry on the legislation of the country under the new circumstances in which we were placed. While Mr. Campbell who made this statesmanlike and patriotic declaration was returned by acclamation, Mr. Annand, who pledged himself to repeal, was defeated at the polls. I ask my hon. friend who has blamed the unionists so severely for acting without the question having been fairly submitted to the people, how he can, in the presence of facts like these, use the power he obtained for the purpose of endeavouring to destroy and break down this union before giving it that fair trial to which he stands pledged before the people? Can my hon. friend expect that the Imperial Parliament who passed this act with a petition against it signed according to Mr. Annand's declaration by "about 40,000 petitioners," break faith with this great confederation at the instance of representatives who only succeeded in polling about half that number of electors, and upon the pledge that they would give this measure a "fair trial?"

No man is in a worse position to urge objections to the mode in which this measure was passed than the hon. member who has just addressed the House, as it is well known that he spent years in advocating a system of responsible government by which the affairs of the country should be controlled according to the wishes of the majority of the people's representatives. What guarantee can my hon. friend give the Imperial Government that the same reaction will not take place in Nova Scotia that was witnessed in New Brunswick, where one year an overwhelming majority of the electors declared against the union and the next a still larger majority polled their votes in favour of it? I am not without hope, Mr. Speaker, that my hon. friend will yet reconsider his position on this question, and assume the same statesmanlike and patriotic position which the former opponents of union representing New Brunswick have taken. I read with great pleasure the manly declaration made by my hon. friend (Mr. Anglin) at Montreal the other night, a declaration that did honour to the head and the heart of that gentleman—that although he had been conscientiously opposed to the union, he was now prepared to give his aid to work it out in the manner best calculated to promote the good of our common country. Sir, I would rejoice to see my hon. friend from Nova Scotia in the same way to assume a position that would enable the country to avail itself of the great ability he possesses. He says that the Government could not give him or those who act with him anything that he could honourably accept. It would, of course, be impossible for any Government to strengthen the hands of those who declare their intention to break down the constitution of the country whenever they obtain the power. But my hon. friend must see that his position renders it equally impossible for him to aid a constitutional opposition in the responsible and important Parliamentary functions they are called upon to discharge, as nothing would necessarily paralyse an opposition so completely as being associated with parties hostile to the constitution of the country and anxious to destroy it.

Under these circumstances, I put it seriously to my hon. friend whether the obligations which he has assumed by taking a seat in this Parliament do not bind him, at all events, to give that fair trial to the existing institutions of the country, which the electors of Nova Scotia had a right to expect from his declarations previous to the elections?

I make these observations from no apprehension that the union of these provinces can in the slightest degree be endangered by any course which the hon. member, or those who sustain him, may take, but in order to avert the evils to our common country, and especially to my own province, likely to result from this mischievous agitation for repeal.

Although this confederation is entirely safe from the assaults of all, I cannot be indifferent to the injury that may be inflicted upon us among those who do not understand the question by such speeches as that delivered by the hon. member for Hants to-night. This avowed hostility to the union will encourage those who are anxious for our downfall, and the declaration by a member of this House that we are weak and defenceless will invite aggression.

No statement could be more unfounded or injurious than the assertion that the mother-country wishes to get rid of us. It is true that neither in the Lords nor Commons of England, whose action on this question has been so severely criticised by my hon. friend, was any attempt made to change the measure as arranged between the representatives of these provinces and the British Government, but it is well known that no colonial question ever received more respectful attention at the hands of the statesmen, of the Parliament, and the press of England than was bestowed upon this question of confederation from the time that it was first brought under their notice until its final consummation. The effect of a settled and permanent condition of public affairs upon capital is well known, and while I feel confident that this agitation will be utterly bootless of any result, it will, in the meantime, largely prevent the introduction, especially in Nova Scotia, of the population, capital, and skill that would otherwise immediately flow in to develope the resources and enrich that section of the union. I appeal to my hon. friend whether it is patriotic to inflict such injury upon his country?

Having made these explanations, I feel it would not be right at this late hour to trespass on the indulgence of the House, or I would read a few elegant extracts from the vigorous pen and eloquent tongue of my hon. friend to show how much more able and eloquent he was when advocating the union of these provinces than since he has adopted the unworthy policy of endeavouring to belittle and depreciate his own country (loud cries of "Go on.")

I will now briefly notice a few of the criticisms which my hon. friend offered this evening. He complains that the salary assigned to the Governor-General is 10,000*l.* sterling. I think if we contrast the salary formerly given to that high officer before the great step which the union of the maritime provinces has given to the former colony of

Canada, the amount will not be found disproportionate. It must be remembered that this officer is the connecting-link with the Crown and the representative of her Majesty in this important part of the empire, and that we could hardly expect to obtain the services of the leading statesmen of England at any smaller amount. My hon. friend complains of the number of departments in the Government. It was no doubt necessary, in making provision for the proper representation of the different sections of the confederation, to have the thirteen departments, but I would suggest respectfully to the Hon. Minister of Justice whether, in the present peculiar position of Nova Scotia, the able and indefatigable Minister of State for Canada might not be charged with the additional duty of the Secretary of State for the Provinces. The vacancy created by the resignation of the Hon. Minister of Finance might in the same way lead to the consolidation of that department with those of the able and experienced Ministers of Customs and Excise. I am well assured that her Majesty's Government will give these questions the most careful consideration, well knowing that nothing will give greater confidence to the country than a judicious economy in the administration of public affairs.

My hon. friend now represents our position as utterly defenceless and treats with ridicule the proposal to arm the militia, yet he ought not to forget the following passage of his speech in our Legislature, so long ago as 1854 :—

" How often have we heard that our republican neighbours were going to overrun the provinces. They have attempted it once or twice, but have always been beaten out, and I do not hesitate to say that the British Americans, over whom the old flag flies, are able to defend every inch of their territory, even though her Majesty's troops were withdrawn.

" Taking our population at two millions and a half (it is now nearer four millions), every fifth person should be able to draw a trigger, giving 500,000 men capable of bearing arms. Such a force would be powerless as an invading army, but in defence of these provinces invincible by any force that could be sent from abroad."

The opinions of the hon. member would also appear to have undergone material change since 1863, when in moving a vote of thanks at Halifax to the Hon. Mr. McGee for his eloquent advocacy of a union of the colonies, he thus urged its great importance on the ground of defence :—

" He thought a union should not be delayed till we had drifted into difficulties. How short-sighted were the English statesmen of old who lost them the thirteen states, when the difficulty could have been arranged in a month, the horrors of the revolutionary war prevented, and all our race living at peace and harmony at present without the bickering and animosity which prevail in their midst. Talk of the fall of Quebec being a source of sorrow to the inhabitants of this province. It would be more. If the St. Lawrence were in the hands of our enemies, we should be compelled to beg permission to tear down

the British flag. What he wished for Nova Scotia was, that she may be the frontage of a mighty colony, upon which it may be truly said the sun never sets. No man can look upon Halifax and its environs, its harbour, its citadel, and say it was made for this province alone.

"The United States have drifted into a civil war; and we may drift into a tight place from which it may be difficult to extricate ourselves. The States may assail us; but if we had a railway by which troops could be sent from Quebec or other military stations to the threatened point, we would be saved."

I trust, sir, that now that we have the moral strength arising from the union of these provinces and the assurance of support in any emergency from the Imperial Government, it will not be found necessary to burden our people with any oppressive taxation for defence; but my hon. friend should remember that when he was opposing this union of the colonies, he presented a counter scheme for the defence of this country, under which all British America would be compelled to pay into the Imperial Treasury for the support of the army and navy of England. This enormous taxation, far exceeding anything that we can be called upon here to contribute, was to be disbursed, under my hon. friend's scheme, by a Parliament in which Nova Scotia was to have two representatives and Canada four or five. My hon. friend, who has inspired such dread in the back settlements of Nova Scotia that the young men would be draughted to protect the helpless people of Ontario and Quebec, proposed to the British Government that in addition to this heavy taxation we should contribute our quota of the army required in any war in which Great Britain might be engaged.

In complaining of the mode in which the union measure passed the House of Commons, it was stated that the Commons was influenced by an inaccurate statement made by an hon. member of that body. As this refers to Mr. Watkin's remark that confederation was made an issue at the polls at the last election, I am glad to have the opportunity to make an explanation. When Mr. Bright asserted that this question of union had not been before the people in Nova Scotia, Mr. Watkin left his seat and came over to the part of the House where I was sitting near the Hon. Mr. Galt, who remembers well the circumstances. Mr. Watkin said—"Dr. Tupper, I wish to speak to you," and I went with him some distance to the side of the room. He then said—"What is your answer to Mr. Bright's statement that this question has never been before the people?" I said the answer is this—In 1861 Mr. Howe, when leader of the Government, moved a resolution in favour of the union of the provinces which passed the Assembly unanimously. That previously to the last general election I had publicly advocated such a union as has now been agreed upon and that I was brought into power and this measure had been carried by a large majority of the present Parliament. Mr. Watkin, knowing that this question was now one of controversy, supposed that it had been made an issue at the polls, as would undoubtedly have been the

case only that we were all unanimous upon the question at that time. I turned to Mr. Galt during Mr. Watkin's speech and remarked how difficult it was to make parties understand when they were not familiar with the history of a question. Had I wished to mislead Mr. Watkin I would not have dared to do so, as I had placed in his hands a published history of the whole question in Nova Scotia. This House will, I am sure, exonerate Mr. Watkin from any intentional misrepresentation.

My hon. friend takes particular exception to that portion of the speech which indicates a desire for western extension. This is the more remarkable in connection with the great importance which he attaches, and justly, to immigration as the great means of rendering the country strong and prosperous. With 60,000 square miles of fertile soil in the Red River and Saskatchewan country to invite the immigrant and increase our population, this question of western extension becomes one of the greatest importance; but I will give you the forcible and eloquent observations of my hon. friend upon this subject as much more conclusive and instructing than anything I can afford:—

"The Hudson's Bay territory includes 250,000 miles. Throwing aside the more bleak and inhospitable regions, we have a magnificent country between Canada and the Pacific, out of which five or six noble provinces may be formed larger than any we have and presenting to the hand of industry, and to the eye of speculation, every variety of soil, climate, and resource. With such a territory as this to overrun, organise, and improve, think you that we shall stop even at the western bounds of Canada? or even at the shore of the Pacific? Vancouver Island, with its vast coal measures, lies beyond. The beautiful islands of the Pacific and the growing commerce of the ocean are beyond. Populous China and the rich East are beyond; and the sails of our children's children will reflect as familiarly the sunbeams of the south as they now brave the angry tempest of the north. The maritime provinces which I now address are but the Atlantic frontage of this boundless and prolific region—the wharves upon which its business will be transacted and beside which its rich argosies are to lie. Nova Scotia is one of these. Will you, then, put your hands unitedly, with order, intelligence, and energy, to this great work? Refuse, and you are recreant to every principle which lies at the base of your country's prosperity and advancement; refuse, and the Deity's handwriting upon land and sea is to you unintelligible language; refuse, and Nova Scotia, instead of occupying the foreground as she now does, should have been thrown back at least behind the Rocky Mountains. God has planted your country in the front of this boundless region; see that you comprehend its destiny and resources—see that you discharge, with energy and elevation of soul, the duties which devolve upon you in virtue of your position."

Allow me in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, to thank the House for the kind and attentive hearing given to the discursive observations I have been able on the moment to offer in reply to the speech of my hon. friend.

WAS CONFEDERATION A SURPRISE IN NOVA SCOTIA?

It is difficult to reconcile the assertions made by the delegates from Nova Scotia, that this measure was carried without due investigation, with the following statement made at a repeal meeting at Halifax, in January last, by Mr. E. M. M'Donald, one of the leading members of the anti-union party in the Dominion Parliament: —

It is hardly necessary or appropriate now to review at length the events of the past three years, but I cannot help remarking here that Nova Scotians owe to themselves, to a great extent, the degradation of their present position. You brought on yourselves in part these difficulties which have arisen because too many of you were willing to believe a lie—to give credit to the men who, however they had once been trusted, should never have been trusted so entirely that their opinions should override your judgments and that you should refuse to investigate for yourselves. Had you three years ago, when the delegates returned from Quebec and stood here to expound and elaborate their scheme, resolved to think and act for yourselves, without accepting the measure merely because Archibald or Tupper said so, Nova Scotia might have been saved from the degradation in which she is placed to-day. I am not surprised, therefore, that the delegates who formed the scheme should have presumed so far on the credulity of the people whom they misrepresented—that the Parliament of Great Britain should be led away and deceived by men who were able to deceive their own bosom friends. When the delegates said that the union was going to elevate Nova Scotia, cheapen our Government, and give our public men, our merchants, and our fishermen larger spheres of action and induced the people of Halifax, without inquiry, to believe their statements for the time being, it is no wonder they were able to deceive the British Parliament as they did.

IS THE TARIFF OF CANADA PROTECTIVE?

We find the following remarks in the very able speech delivered by the Hon. J. Howe at the Detroit Convention in 1865, and as Canada since that time has made a great reduction in her tariff, we cannot understand the statement that confederation has imposed a protective tariff on Nova Scotia for the benefit of Canadian manufactures:—

Let me ask your attention to another matter which requires to be explained. Mr. Seymour, of New York, who made an excellent speech in favour of the resolution, took exception to the high tariff of Canada. Now, in the provinces our people are naturally anxious to improve their internal communications and bring them up to a level with other portions of the continent. Yielding to the pressure, the Government of Canada has expended large sums in the construction of railroads and canals; and let me say that for every pound expended this western country has, either directly or indirectly, derived some benefit. But the money being expended, of course the interest has to be paid, and that this might be done changes have been made in the tariff from time to time. But you have been compelled to raise your tariff; and although I have not the two to compare, I assume that yours is much higher than that of Canada. Of this we do not complain. Why should you? Both countries must maintain their credit and pay their obligations.

The necessities of Canada from these large expenditures compelled her to raise her import duty. And, after all, Canada cannot levy a tax upon your manufactures that she does not also lay on those of Britain, so that you may be easy on that point. We are no more fond of taxation than you are, and there is no more popular cry for a man to get up in our Legislatures than that of reducing taxation.

Has not Canada always been in advance of her means in trying to improve the course of navigation?

I know that a large portion of her debt has been expended in these canal improvements to accommodate the great West, and I know there is no question at this time which engrosses the attention of Canadians more than how they can best extend these highways of commerce.